

WORLD AGRICULTURAL WEATHER HIGHLIGHTS

May 12, 2000

1 - UNITED STATES

During April, much-needed rain boosted topsoil moisture in the eastern Corn Belt, but dryness continued to intensify in western areas. Meanwhile, heavy rainfall eased or erased drought from eastern Texas to the interior Southeast, but long-term moisture deficits continued to mount across the lower Southeast. Variable amounts of rain fell on the Plains, maintaining generally favorable topsoil moisture levels in key winter wheat areas. In contrast, most of southern and western Texas remained extremely dry. Following beneficial March precipitation, dry weather returned to the Southwest. Farther west, mid-month storminess elevated monthly precipitation totals well above normal in much of California and the Northwest. The month's most significant cold snaps caused only localized damage to winter wheat, fruit-tree blooms, and emerging summer crops, affecting the central Plains on April 4, 8, and 16, and the Southeast on April 5 and 9.

2 - SOUTH AMERICA

Above-normal April and early-May rainfall caused only minor summer crop harvesting delays across most of central and northern Argentina. Above-normal rainfall eased long-term drought in Uruguay. Across southern Brazil, mostly below-normal April rainfall favored soybean harvesting. Rainfall during late April and early May boosted soil moisture for winter wheat planting across eastern Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, and Sao Paulo.

3 - EUROPE

In April, frequent rain in western Europe hampered spring grain and summer crop planting, but aided jointing to reproductive winter grains. In much of eastern Europe, unseasonably warm, dry weather reduced topsoil moisture. Soil moisture remained mostly adequate in the north following a wet winter, however, more rain was needed in parts of the south. In east-central Europe, snow melt and early-April rainfall caused flooding in Hungary.

4 - NORTHWESTERN AFRICA

In April, showers in northern Morocco eased prolonged dryness, while drought further intensified in southern Morocco and Algeria, hastening maturity in winter grains. In Tunisia, light rains in early April were followed by periodic heat and dryness, reducing crop prospects.



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5 - FSU-WESTERN

In April, unseasonably mild weather and periodic dryness prevailed in Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, and the Baltics, promoting rapid growth of winter grains and raising soil temperatures for spring grain planting. In early May, sub-freezing temperatures as far south as Ukraine and southern Russia had little impact on jointing wheat, but may have caused some localized damage to newly emerged spring-planted crops.

6 - MIDDLE EAST AND TURKEY

Overall warm, dry weather in April hastened winter grain maturity from eastern Syria to Iran. In Turkey, beneficial spring rains continued to favor wheat development and increased long-term irrigation for summer crops such as cotton.

7 - SOUTH ASIA

Warm, dry weather during April favored drydown and harvesting of winter grains and oilseeds in the northwest. Showers maintained adequate irrigation reserves in eastern India and Bangladesh.

8 - EASTERN ASIA

In the North China Plain, mostly dry, warm April weather increased irrigation demands for winter wheat. However, early-May rainfall eased some of the dryness. In Manchuria, near-normal rainfall provided adequate topsoil moisture for spring wheat and corn planting. Below-normal April rainfall reduced moisture supplies for winter wheat and rapeseed across central China (Hubei, southern Anhui, and Jiangsu). Near- to above-normal April rainfall boosted moisture supplies for winter crops and early rice transplanting across Sichuan and southern China. Heavier showers likely caused flooding in Guangdong.

9 - SOUTHEAST ASIA

During mid-April, the rainy season began across Indochina, boosting moisture supplies for main-season rice transplanting in Thailand and winter rice development in northern Vietnam. Across Java, Indonesia, near-normal April rainfall caused only minor rice harvesting delays. Near- to above-normal April rainfall increased moisture supplies for oil palm across interior Sumatra, Java and peninsular Malaysia. Above-normal rainfall slowed second-crop grain harvesting across the central Philippines, but drier weather during early May favored fieldwork.

10 - SOUTH AFRICA

During April, periodic showers aided late summer crop development and improved planting prospects for winter wheat.

11 - AUSTRALIA

Mostly favorable harvest weather prevailed during April in cotton and sorghum areas in the east. In early May, scattered showers hampered harvests in New South Wales but improved topsoil moisture levels for wheat germination.